

**PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF BANGOR**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010**

**Board Members Present:** Allie Brown, Chairman  
Jeff Barnes  
Paul Bolin  
Doug Damon  
John Miller  
Andy Sturgeon  
Miles Theeman

**City Staff Present:** David Gould  
Jim Ring  
Norm Heitmann  
Paul Nicklas  
Peter Witham  
Bud Knickerbocker  
Lynn Johnson

**City Councilors Present:** Councilor Blanchette  
Councilor Palmer

**News Media Present:** Bangor Daily News  
WABI-TV 5  
WVII-ABC7

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 3:55 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Item No. 1:** Site Development Plan approval to construct a 22' x 25' loading dock addition and reconfigure the existing parking at 73 Hammond Street in a Government and Institutional Service District. Penobscot County, applicant. (Continued from March 16, 2010 Meeting.)

Mr. Miller indicated that at the last meeting he disclosed that he has a conflict of interest with this item as his site had been in prior negotiations with the Post Office. Mr. Barnes moved that Mr. Miller has a conflict of interest and should be recused. Mr. Theeman seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 6 to 0.

Attorney P. Andrew Hamilton noted for the record that the Board had just completed a site visit touring both the inside and outside of the building. Mr. Ray Bolduc, P.E. with WBRC Architects-Engineers outlined the site tour in which additions to the original plan were outlined and pointed out on the site at 73 Hammond Street. He discussed the entrance to the site along Hammond Street, proposed new sidewalks and crosswalks, the location of the proposed loading dock; existing and new parking, improvements to the ramp exit onto Franklin Street which includes parabolic mirrors, pedestrian signals and their proposed locations.

Mr. Hamilton indicated that since the March 16<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting the applicant has had time to address further questions posed at that meeting. He noted that Tom Gorrill, of Palmer-Gorrill, Bill Collins, County Administrator and Dick Shea representing the Postal Service were available to answer questions of the Board. Mr. Hamilton distributed to the Board a one-page narrative outlining measures to mitigate concerns expressed by the Board. Mitigation measures include reducing the height of the retaining wall to improve visibility, adjustment to the grade and curbing on the ramp to control sheet flows and reduce icing in the winter; signage to indicate that pedestrians are prohibited from walking up the ramp, installation of two parabolic mirrors (one at the top of the ramp and the other at the bottom of the ramp), a warning system to alert pedestrians that vehicles are approaching at the bottom of the ramp. This warning system will have lighting and an audio warning system. There will be a pedestrian crossing at the bottom of the ramp. A suggestion was made to install a gate, however, after review it was deemed not to be a good idea because of maintenance issues and if misused it could be more dangerous. They are proposing signage on Court Street that unauthorized vehicles are prohibited. They don't want vehicles beyond the jail or want the public coming in off of Court Street. They propose a raised pedestrian walk against the building to guide pedestrians on Hammond Street into the building. The first four spaces into the site will be designated for long-term employees and the handicap space will be placed just after those 4 spaces. This will minimize cars backing out of parking stalls closer to Hammond Street.

The Board had discussed reversing the parking. In reviewing this, Mr. Hamilton said that they found that it would narrow the walkway into the building, it may create a parking collision risk, it could increase terrorism threats and it could pose a risk to the Fire Lane access.

Mr. Ray Bolduc discussed the proposed design for drainage improvements to the site. He explained that presently water sheets along the Franklin Street ramp. They are proposing to install curbing 2 feet along the retaining wall on the Franklin Street side to direct this water away from the ramp, minimize potential icing during the winter, and provide for better drainage on the site. They proposed to remove a 20-25', 2-foot portion of the existing retaining wall for better visibility.

Mr. Sturgeon noted that at the last meeting they were proposing to remove one parking space to the left of the ramp on Franklin Street and he did not see that indicated on the site development plan. Mr. Hamilton explained that a letter has been submitted to the City requesting that this be considered. Mr. Sturgeon asked where the existing mail box drop off would be located. Mr. Hamilton indicated that this will be evaluated with the City as to the location. Mr. Sturgeon asked if anything from the prior site development plan had been eliminated. Mr. Hamilton indicated that the plans before the Board are in addition to the other plans.

In response to a question regarding other tenants in the building, County Commissioner Peter Baldacci indicated that the Maine Department of Corrections Parole office is presently a tenant and has an entrance on Franklin Street. They have two parking spaces and create very little customer traffic. The County does have a prospective tenant which is a nonprofit that does not generate much traffic and will be provided with 4 parking spaces.

Mr. Theeman discussed his concern with the various uses and allocation of the parking spaces. He counted 16 spaces against the retaining wall and 21 spaces in the back for a total of 37 spaces - 2 of which were dedicated for handicap use; 4 of which were designated for postal employees and 6 of which were designated for other tenants with a remainder of 25 spaces. He indicated that two spaces will be difficult to use when trucks are backing in and out of the loading dock, as well as, use of those spaces by the Sheriff's Office and people visiting the county jail. He asked Mr. Gorrill if he felt that the remaining spaces dedicated for the post office use would be adequate. Mr. Gorrill discussed the traffic study that his firm conducted at the 202 Harlow Street site (present post office site). He noted that that parking lot is not exclusively used by the post office but shared by other users in this area. They took a conservative approach in allocating 25 spaces for post office use. In their view there would be a net pick up of 5 to 10 spaces at this site. Mr. Gorrill indicated that he felt that 25 spaces was an adequate amount. Mr. Hamilton indicated that the parking space next to the loading dock was removed to avoid conflicts.

Mr. Theeman had concerns that the site development plan presented issues that have not been resolved regarding the site. Commissioner Baldacci indicated that the County did some research as to claims at this location and for the past 25 years he is not aware of any property damage claims filed. He added that the current post office location does not own the parking lot across the street. The City of Bangor owns it. They are proposing dedicated spaces to the post office use at this site. In addition, there is public parking on street and in the Columbia Street Parking Deck which is diagonally across the street. Mr. Baldacci noted that because the Courts have vacated this site there has been a significant increase in available on-street parking spaces.

Mr. Sturgeon asked City Engineer Jim Ring if he would recommend eliminating a parking space to the left of the exit ramp onto Franklin Street. Mr. Ring explained that the elimination of an on-street parking space is a City Council process. In looking at this he would agree that would be a benefit to eliminate that parking space and that he would be in support of that.

Chairman Brown indicated that she felt that there was a gain of parking on the new site. The applicant has done everything that they can with this project.

Mr. Barnes moved to grant Site Development Plan approval to construct a 22' x 25' loading dock addition and reconfigure the existing parking at 73 Hammond Street in a Government and Institutional Service District for Penobscot County, applicant. Mr. Theeman seconded the motion. The Board voted five in favor and one opposed to the motion.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.